

Supplement.

Advocate, Elkhorn, Man. September 9th, 1897.

THE CORNER STONE

OF THE NEW WASHAKADA INDIAN HOME.

Laid on Saturday, 4th, Sept., by Mr. A. E. Forget.

The corner stone of the new Indian Home was laid on Saturday afternoon last, Sept. 4th. High winds made it somewhat unpleasant for those assembled, but nevertheless the stone was well and truly laid by Mr. A. E. Forget, Indian Commissioner. The foundation work of the new building was completed, and the carpenters had made a start, laying the joists on top of the stone. The stone work, with the exception of some four feet which is placed into the earth, is all above ground, making a splendid stone wall over eight feet high. The workmanship was generally admired, and words of praise uttered for the builders. Mr. Williamson had charge of the masonry, and with his staff of able workmen, has made an A. 1 job. The building is so planned as to command a splendid view from any direction. The basement is divided into fourteen apartments, and thick, stout pillars and walls indicate that a building is being erected, that will not crumble in a life time.

On the platform erected for the corner stone proceedings were Mr. Forget, Rev. Mr. Mercer, Rev. Mr. Bunt, Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Wilson, Mr. W. M. Cushing and Mr. Williamson. The ceremony began by the people, led by the Indian children, singing the Hymn 'In Thy Name O Lord' followed by prayer by the Rev. Mr. Mercer. Mr. Wilson then called upon Mr. Cushing, for an address.

Mr. Cushing responded, referring to the founder of the Indian Home and reciting events previous to the burning of the school. After dealing with minor matters in connection with re-building, he said that the laying of the corner stone marks an epoch in the history of Elkhorn. The building, erected for educating the wards of the country, for fitting them to pursue their way through life, will be a monument to the government. The Indians have not the advantages we have and the government

deserves credit for assisting them thus. He referred to the efficient management of the school, and expressed gratification that the government was continuing the work here.

Mr. Forget was next introduced and said:

Before proceeding to the performance of the duty kindly assigned to me of laying down the corner stone of what is to be in the near future the Washakada Indian Home, permit me to say a few words prompted by this very interesting ceremony.

It was my privilege, as it is to-day, to be present as a representative of the Indian Department, on the occasion of the formal opening of this Home in August 1889. Thanks to the untiring exertions of the Rev. E. F. Wilson, the founder of this Institution, and father of its present superintendent, the three buildings, which up to that disastrous night in Nov. 1895, composed the original Home, had been completed, and the event was thought a fitting occasion for the formal opening of the school, which would be remembered as marking an important step in the early history of the Institution. The ceremony was presided over by the Very Rev., the Bishop of Rupert's Land, Archbishop McCrae, the present Primate of Canada, whose unavoidable absence here to-day, much as it may be regretted by himself, is still more so by us all. There were also present the Rev. Mr. Wilson and other clergy men, whose names through the lapse of time I do not now recall, and a large number of ladies and gentlemen, citizens of this town. Prominent among the latter was one one of the early citizens of Elkhorn, a citizen whose name will ever be remembered with gratitude; I refer to the late Mr. Rowswell, whose generous subscription towards this institution determined its establishment here. Great were then the hopes entertained with regard to the progressive development of this school; and, as an official, whose duty it is to report about the work done in this and similar institutions, I am pleased to say that our most sanguine hopes have, in a large measure, been realized under the able administration of Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, aided by the wise counsels of the mother of the latter and

the active co-operation of an efficient and united staff. The progress of the Home received, however, a terrible check on the night of the 13th of November, 1895, when all, with the exception of the boys' building, was consumed by fire. I need not enter into the details of that awful night; you all know them—suffice it to say that the Home became homeless, and but for the generous hospitality of the citizens of this town, the pupils would have been without roofs to shelter themselves. Ever since then the work of the school has been carried on under great disadvantages, the pupils being scattered all over town, and yet good discipline is maintained. This is highly creditable to both the authorities of the Home and the townspeople. But to every misfortune there is a compensation. From the ashes of the former Home a new and a larger institution is being raised, which will afford greater opportunities for good to the superintendent and his staff, increased means of comfort to its inmates and which will be more in keeping with the growing town of Elkhorn.

With your permission the corner stone of this new building will now be laid. Mrs. Wilson having presented Mr. Forget with a silver trowel, the stone was lowered and Mr. Forget proceeded to lay it in mortar, then formally declared it well and truly laid.

Rev. Mr. Bunt delivered prayer, "Onward Christian Soldiers" was sung and the proceedings ended.

RECEPTION.

In the evening a reception was held, which was attended by a large number of townspeople. The hall was nicely arranged and the people indulged in games of various kinds. About 9.30, Mr. Wilson took the floor, and after briefly referring to the doings of the day, announced a program of speeches, calling first upon Mr. Cushing. Mr. Cushing arose, paid a passing tribute to the guest of the evening, Mr. Forget, welcoming him, on behalf of the citizens. He could not refrain from testifying at the present time to the good conduct of the boys and girls of the Home. It was a pleasure to see the manner in which they conducted themselves; they could set a pattern to others. He hoped that Mr. Forget would see and appreciate the friendliness existing between the Indian pupils and the towns-

people. After making reference to various matters in connection with the school, he gave way to others.

The chairman next called for a song by Mr. John Wright, who rendered in excellent style, "Many Happy Returns of the Day," Miss M. Howard playing the accompaniment.

Mr. John Middleton was the next speaker. He was proud to be present to celebrate the laying of the corner stone of a Home which will be a home indeed. He used the word "Home" in its fullest sense, as the robust faces of the children showed good treatment. The beneficial training they were receiving would redound to their future happiness. Bringing civilization within the reach of the aborigines was a grand feature of the policy of this country, and these buildings are about the best investment the country has. The trophies, etc., won by the boys, were there testifying to the capabilities of the Indians, and the effect of their training will be seen in the future generations."

Mrs. VanNostrand next rendered a solo

Mr. F. W. Clingan was then called upon. He was pleased to be one of the number to welcome the commissioner, and hoped to know him better. He thought that Mr. Forget would like coming after he got to know us. Speaking of the children and the school, he said that we are all knew the children as well as we know one another. Every face was familiar, and the children themselves appeared to be perfectly happy. When the di-astrous fire visited the school, it was really their home that they lost. He hoped to see as much of the Indian boys and girls when they got into their new home as we do now, and that the familiarity and kindness would continue to exist. The training being given the pupils of the school was making them more competent men and women; they were cultivating a manliness and usefulness that would be beneficial to them after they leave the school.

Mr. Williamson testified to the fact that Mr. Forget laid the corner stone square. He complimented the government on the manner in which they were conducting the work, viz: letting it by day labor instead of by contract, saying that a superior, yet less expensive job was the result.

Instrumental by Miss VanNostrand.

Rev. Mr. Bunt was the next speaker. He said that part of our make up belongs to others, another part of nature we inherit and another comes through force of circumstances. Circumstances

helped to improve. Through circumstances we are enjoying Christian privileges and we can accord them to others less favored. A missionary in British Columbia said that the Indians of a certain section were far ahead of the white people; had better houses, farms, etc. The speaker rejoiced that the people are improving, and that the circumstances were such that they can improve. But people are not to foot up-life alone; they are to be assisted. He joined in extending a welcome to the commissioner, and said that he was greatly impressed with the way in which Mr. Forget conducted his work, as he showed not the slightest partiality in working amongst the different churches. This fact gained for him the greatest esteem from the various denominations.

Song by Mr. G. T. Rogers.

Short speech by Mr. J. Cole.

The chairman, Mr. Wilson, next announced Mr. Forget.

Mr. Forget took the platform, amidst applause and commenced an interesting speech by extending warm thanks for the cordial welcome he had received; especially thanking Mr. Bunt for his words of praise. He had endeavored, Mr. Bunt said, to be absolutely impartial; he said that his object as an official of the government, and only wish was that education be extended to Indians, whether it be under the Methodist, Presbyterian, English, Baptist, Catholic or any other denomination. His aim was to try and induce the Indians to send their children to school, leaving them free to select their church, but a case where compulsion was used the nearest school received the children. Speaking of compulsory education the commissioner said that where the children could not be secured otherwise, the law would be exercised. He wished those Indian children present to make this fact known to their parents. The speaker said that he was glad he had been invited to lay the corner stone, as he had an opportunity of coming into contact with the people of Elkhorn. He was glad to hear on the evidence of two previous speakers that he had made a good job. There was one subject upon which he might say a good deal—the Indian school, but by reviewing its history he could not tell his hearers anything they did not already know. He was pleased to note the fact that a bond of affection existed between the pupils of the school and the people of the town. He had noticed it at a game of football. He considered it an important feature in a school where the children can mingle

with white people. Especially the pupils able to hold converse with English and admitted the work of the staff. One of the students attending the school and the shops he had reported favorable to re-building the Home, and shortly after received orders to go ahead with the building; and now he had the privilege of laying the corner stone. He was here at the laying of the stone of the original building in 1889. He hoped that those who were working on the present building would do a fair day's work. The day labor plan was proving very satisfactory. Indian boys were engaged and were gaining the experience of the building, etc., which could not be had otherwise. The Commissioner concluded by again returning thanks to the people, and hoped to meet them all again individually or collectively.

After light refreshments and general conversation the national anthem was sung and the people dispersed.

An Indian Printer.

Mr. John Hawkes, editor of the White-wood Herald, writes as follows of the boy, Miles Cochrane, of the Washakada Indian Home printing staff, who has been employed on the Herald staff for the past month:

"I have to thank the Home for the great help Miles has given me at a difficult time. For Miles himself I have nothing but praise. He has boarded in my house, sat at my table and mixed with my family. We went on the principle that if Miles behaved as well as a white man, he was entitled to be treated as a white man, and I am bound to say his behavior has been excellent in every respect reflecting credit, and high credit, on himself and on the training he has received. In the office he has been steadily industrious, and on no occasion has he received or required a word of reproof." I remain

Yours Faithfully

JOHN HAWKES,

Editor White-wood Herald.

P. S. I have the more pleasure in testifying to Miles' industry and good conduct, because it is pretty well known that I am opposed to the industrial training school system, and shall therefore not be suspected of any prejudice in his favor." J. H.

